

Serve Idaho Governor's Commission on Service and Volunteerism

Review Process and Selection Criteria for 2015-2016 AmeriCorps Programs

Applicant Name/Organization: _____

Program Name: _____

NEW APPLICANT ☐

RECOMPETE APPLICANT ☐

FIXED PRICE APPLICANT ☐

			possible	reviewer
1. Executive Summary	0		0	
2. Program Design	50% (50 points)			
		Problem/Need	9	
		Logic Model Worksheet	17	
		Evidence Base	8	
		Notice Priority	3	
		Member Training	4	
		Member Supervision	3	
		Member Experience	3	
		Commitment to AmeriCorps Identification	3	
		TOTAL SECTION 2.	50	
3. Organizational Capacity	25% (25 points)		25	
4. Cost Effectiveness & Budget Adequacy	25% (25 points)		25	
TOTAL SCORE:				

Do you recommend this application be sent forward to the Corporation for National and Community Service to be considered for possible AmeriCorps funding? ☐ **Yes** ☐ **No**

Reviewer Signature: _____

Date: _____

Page Limit cannot exceed 15 pages for the Narratives, including the Executive Summary and SF 424 Facesheet, as the pages print out from eGrants.

1. Executive Summary: -0- Points

The applicant will fill in the blanks in the following template to complete the executive summary:

The [Name of the organization] will have [Number of] AmeriCorps members who will [what the members will be doing] in [the locations the AmeriCorps members will be]. At the end of the first program year, the AmeriCorps members will be responsible for [anticipated outcome of project]. In addition, the AmeriCorps members will leverage an additional [number of leveraged volunteers, if applicable] who will engage in [what the leveraged volunteers will be doing].

This program will focus on the CNCS focus area of [Focus Area(s)]*. The CNCS investment of \$[amount of request] will be matched with \$[amount of projected match], \$[amount of local, state, and federal funds] in public funding and \$[amount of non-governmental funds] in private funding.

*If the program is not operating in a CNCS' focus area, omit this sentence.

Fixed Amount grant applicants should list their leveraged resources (see Glossary) because they are not required to provide a specific amount of match, but still must raise significant additional resources to operate the program. CNCS will post all Executive Summaries of awarded grant applications on www.nationalservice.gov in the interest of transparency and Open Government.

REVIEWER COMMENTS/FEEDBACK for Executive Summary:

2. Rationale and Approach/Program Design - 50 points total

In assessing Program Design, reviewers will examine the degree to which the applicant demonstrates how AmeriCorps members are particularly well-suited to solving the identified community needs.

Selection Criteria	Not Responsive Information missing	Marginally Responsive Needs clarification/ Additional information	Responsive Needs little additional information	Total Score
a. Problem/Need	0	4.5	9	

For all programs, reviewers will consider the quality of your response to the following:

- The applicant clearly describes how the community problem/need will be addressed by the program.
- The applicant clearly describes how the community need/problem is prevalent and severe in communities where members will serve and the need has been well documented with relevant data.

Selection Criteria
b. AmeriCorps members as Highly Effective Means to Solve Community Problems Evidence-Base and Measurable Community Impact

The total score for b. = 25 points.

This has been split into three components to enable us to see where an applicant is strong or weak.

Applicants will be awarded up to **17 points** for providing a detailed theory of change (logic model) using the Logic Model Worksheet (see attachment to grant application).

A theory of change is a description of how and why a set of activities are expected to lead to early, intermediate, and long-term outcomes over a specified period. A logic model is a graphical representation of program activities and their intended outcomes as depicted in the theory of change.

Selection Criteria	Not Responsive Information missing	Marginally Responsive Needs clarification/ Additional information	Responsive Needs little additional information	Total Score
► LOGIC MODEL WORKSHEET	0	8.5	17	

► LOGIC MODEL WORKSHEET- 17 POINTS

Points will be awarded based on quality and completeness of the logic model.

- The applicant clearly describes the proposed intervention including the roles of AmeriCorps members and (if applicable) the roles of leveraged volunteers.
- The applicant clearly describes how the intervention is likely to lead to the outcomes identified in the applicant's theory of change.
- The applicant clearly describes how the AmeriCorps members will produce significant and unique contributions to existing efforts to address the stated problem.
- All elements of the logic model are logically aligned.

The logic model shall depict:

- A summary of the community problem outlined in the narrative.
- The inputs or resources that are necessary to deliver the intervention, including:
 - Number of locations or sites in which members will provide services
 - Number of AmeriCorps members that will deliver the intervention
- The core activities that define the intervention or program model that members will implement or deliver, including:
 - The duration of the intervention (e.g., the total number of weeks, sessions or months of the intervention).
 - The dosage of the intervention (e.g., the number of hours per session or sessions per week.)
 - The target population for the intervention (e.g., disconnected youth, third graders at a certain reading proficiency level).
- The measurable outputs that result from delivering the intervention (i.e. number of beneficiaries served.) Identify which National Performance Measures will be used as output indicators.
- Outcomes that demonstrate changes in knowledge/skill, attitude, behavior, or condition that occur as a result of the intervention.

Programs may include short, medium, or long-term outcomes in the logic model. While performance measure outcomes should be consistent with the program's theory of change, programs are not required to measure all outcomes that are included in the

logic model. The Logic Model should identify which National Performance Measures will be used as outcome indicators.

Applicants with multiple interventions should complete one Logic Model chart which incorporates each intervention.

Selection Criteria	Not Responsive Information missing	Marginally Responsive Needs clarification/ Additional information	Responsive Needs little additional information	Total Score
► MEASURABLE COMMUNITY IMPACT	0	2.5	5	

- The applicant clearly describes the proposed intervention including the roles of AmeriCorps members and (if applicable) the roles of leveraged volunteers.
- The applicant clearly describes how the intervention is likely to lead to the outcomes identified in the applicant's theory of change.
- The applicant clearly describes how the AmeriCorps members will produce significant and unique contributions to existing efforts to address the stated problem.
- All elements of the logic model are logically aligned.

Programs may include short, medium, or long-term outcomes in the logic model. While performance measure outcomes should be consistent with the program's theory of change, programs are not required to measure all outcomes that are included in the logic model. The Logic Model should identify which National Performance Measures will be used as outcome indicators.

Applicants with multiple interventions should complete one Logic Model chart which incorporates each intervention.

Selection Criteria	Not Responsive Information missing	Marginally Responsive Needs clarification/ Additional information	Responsive Needs little additional information	Total Score
► EVIDENCE BASE	0	4	8	

Applicants will be awarded up to 8 points for providing evidence that their proposed intervention will lead to the outcomes identified in the theory of change. Applicants shall provide a description of the studies and evaluations conducted that provide evidence that the proposed intervention is effective for the proposed population and community challenge, and should describe how this evidence places them in one of the five evidence levels listed below. Applicants must fully describe how they meet the requirement of that level, using results from studies and evaluations. Applicants are strongly encouraged to describe the evidence that supports the strongest evidence tier, and all relevant evidence presented must be included in this section. This section must include specific citations of studies and/or evaluation and research reports.

Applicants classifying their evidence as Moderate or Strong must submit up to two studies, evaluation reports, briefs, or peer-reviewed articles cited in this section as separate attachments. Studies should be sent to AdditionalDocuments@cns.gov by the application deadline and include in the subject line the application ID and "evaluation studies."

For each report cited, include the date of the report, a description that shows its relevancy to the proposed program model, the methodology used in the study, and the strength of the findings (e.g. confidence level.)

The five tiered evidence levels are:

No evidence (0 points) means that the applicant has not provided evidence that they have collected any qualitative or quantitative data to date.

Pre-preliminary evidence (1 point) means the applicant presents evidence that it has collected quantitative or qualitative data

from program staff, program participants, or beneficiaries that have been used for program improvement, performance measurement reporting, and/or tracking. An example could be gathering feedback from program participants following their receipt of the intervention.

Preliminary evidence (2 points) means the applicant presents an initial evidence base that can support conclusions about the program’s contribution to observed outcomes. The evidence base consists of at least one non-experimental study conducted on the proposed program (or another similar program that uses a comparable intervention). A study that demonstrates improvement in program beneficiaries over time on one or more intended outcomes OR an implementation (process evaluation) study used to learn and improve program operations would constitute preliminary evidence. Examples of research that meet the standards include: 1) outcome studies that track program beneficiaries through a service pipeline and measure beneficiaries’ responses at the end of the program; and 2) pre- and post-test research that determines whether beneficiaries have improved on an intended outcome.

Moderate evidence (4 points) means the applicant presents a reasonably developed evidence base that can support causal conclusions for the specific program proposed by the applicant with moderate confidence. The evidence base consists of one or more quasi-experimental studies conducted on the proposed program (or another similar program that uses a comparable intervention) with positive findings on one or more intended outcomes OR two or more non-experimental studies conducted on the proposed program with positive findings on one or more intended outcomes OR one or more experimental studies of another relevant program that uses a similar intervention. Examples of research that meet the standards include: well-designed and well-implemented quasi-experimental studies that compare outcomes between the group receiving the intervention and a matched comparison group (i.e. a similar population that does not receive the intervention).

Strong evidence (8 points) means the applicant presents an evidence base that can support causal conclusions for the specific program proposed by the applicant with the highest level of confidence. This consists of one or more well-designed and well-implemented experimental studies conducted on the proposed program with positive findings on one or more intended outcomes.

The description of evidence in this section should include as much detailed information as possible. Applicants are advised to focus on presenting high-quality evidence from their strongest studies rather than only cursory descriptions of many studies. Reviewers will examine criteria that may include: a) how closely the program model evaluated in the studies matches the one proposed by the applicant; b) the methodological quality of the studies presented (e.g., statistical power, internal and/or external validity, sample size, etc.); c) the recency of the studies, with a preference towards studies that have been conducted within the last six years; and d) strength of the findings, with preference given to findings that show a large and persistent positive effect on participants demonstrated with confidence levels.

Selection Criteria	Not Responsive Information missing	Marginally Responsive Needs clarification/ Additional information	Responsive Needs little additional information	Total Score
► NOTICE PRIORITY	0	1	3	

- The applicant clearly describes how its proposed program is within one or more of the 2015 AmeriCorps funding priorities as outlined on page 3 and more fully described in the Glossary.
- The applicant clearly describes how the proposed program meets all of the requirements detailed on page 3 and in the Glossary.

Selection Criteria	Not Responsive Information missing	Marginally Responsive Needs clarification/ Additional information	Responsive Needs little additional information	Total Score

► MEMBER TRAINING	0	2	4	
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- The applicant clearly describes how members will receive high quality training to provide effective service.
- The applicant clearly describes how members and volunteers will be aware of, and will adhere to, the rules including prohibited activities.

Selection Criteria	Not Responsive Information missing	Marginally Responsive Needs clarification/ Additional information	Responsive Needs little additional information	Total Score
► MEMBER SUPERVISION	0	1.5	3	

- The applicant clearly describes how members will receive high quality guidance and support from their supervisor to provide effective service.
- The applicant clearly describes how supervisors will be adequately trained/prepared to follow AmeriCorps and program regulations, priorities, and expectations.
- The applicant clearly describes how supervisors will provide members with excellent guidance and support throughout their service.

Selection Criteria	Not Responsive Information missing	Marginally Responsive Needs clarification/ Additional information	Responsive Needs little additional information	Total Score
► MEMBER EXPERIENCE	0	1.5	3	

- AmeriCorps members will gain skills and experience as a result of their training and service that can be utilized and will be valued by future employers after their service term is completed.
- The applicant clearly describes how AmeriCorps members will have access to meaningful service experiences and opportunities for reflection.
- The applicant clearly describes how AmeriCorps members will have opportunities to establish connections with each other and the broader National Service network to build esprit de corps.
- The applicant clearly describes how AmeriCorps members will develop an ethic of and skills for active and productive citizenship and will be encouraged to continue to engage in public and community service after their AmeriCorps term.
- The applicant clearly describes how the program will recruit AmeriCorps members from the communities in which the programs operate.

Selection Criteria	Not Responsive Information missing	Marginally Responsive Needs clarification/ Additional information	Responsive Needs little additional information	Total Score
► COMMITMENT TO AMERICORPS IDENTIFICATION	0	1.5	3	

- The applicant clearly describes how members will know they are AmeriCorps members.

- The applicant clearly describes how the staff and community members where the members are serving will know they are AmeriCorps members.
- The applicant clearly describes how AmeriCorps members will be provided with and will wear service gear that prominently displays the AmeriCorps logo daily.

REVIEWER COMMENTS/FEEDBACK for Rationale and Approach/Program Design:

3. ORGANIZATIONAL CAPABILITY – 25 points total

Selection Criteria	Not Responsive Information missing	Marginally Responsive Needs clarification/ Additional information	Responsive Needs little additional information	Total Score
a. ORGANIZATIONAL BACKGROUND AND STAFFING <i>Recompeting programs and/or previously funded</i>	0	3.5	7	
OR				
a. ORGANIZATIONAL BACKGROUND AND STAFFING <i>New applicants</i>	0	5	10	

- The applicant clearly describes how the organization has the experience, staffing, and management structure to plan and implement the proposed program.
- The applicant clearly describes how the organization has adequate experience administering AmeriCorps grants or other federal grants.
- The applicant clearly describes how the organization has sufficiently engaged community members and partner organizations in planning and implementing its intervention.

As documentation of community support and commitment to the program; please procure, keep on file, but do not submit to CNCS, letter(s) from the applicant's most significant community partner(s). The letter(s) should include what the partner(s) see as the benefit to the community provided by the applicant's AmeriCorps members and what activities would not happen without the AmeriCorps members.

Selection Criteria	Not Responsive Information missing	Marginally Responsive Needs clarification/ Additional information	Responsive Needs little additional information	Total Score
b. COMPLIANCE AND ACCOUNTABILITY <i>Recompeting (current) programs and/or previously funded</i>	0	5.5	11	
OR				
b. COMPLIANCE AND ACCOUNTABILITY <i>New applicants</i>	0	7.5	15	

- The applicant clearly describes how the applicant's organization, in implementation and management of its AmeriCorps program, will prevent and detect compliance issues.
- The applicant clearly describes how the applicant will hold itself, subgrantees, and service site locations (if applicable) accountable if instances of risk or noncompliance are identified.
- The applicant clearly describes how the organization will comply with AmeriCorps rules and regulations including those related to prohibited and unallowable activities at the grantee, subgrantee, and service site locations (if applicable).

Selection Criteria	Not Responsive Information missing	Marginally Responsive Needs clarification/ Additional information	Responsive Needs little additional information	Total Score
c. Past Performance for Current Grantees and Former Grantees only (recompeting applicants and formula grantees)	0	3.5	7	

- The applicant clearly describes how it has met performance measurement targets during the last three years of program operations, or, if not, has an adequate corrective action plan in place.
- The applicant clearly describes how it achieved 100% member enrollment, in the most recent full year of program operations, or if not, has an adequate corrective action plan in place.
- The applicant clearly describes how it achieved 100% member retention, in the most recent full year of program operations, or, if not, has an adequate corrective action plan in place.
- The applicant clearly describes any compliance issues or areas of weakness/risk identified during the last three years of program operations (if applicable) and describes an effective corrective action plan that was implemented.

COMMENTS/FEEDBACK for ORGANIZATIONAL CAPABILITY:

4. COST EFFECTIVENESS and BUDGET ADEQUACY -25 points total

Cost Per MSY – Cost effectiveness will be evaluated by analyzing cost per MSY in relation to the program design. Having a low cost per member is a competitive advantage. New applicants that submit with a low cost per MSY and recompeting applicants that submit with a lower cost per MSY than previously funded may receive higher priority for funding. If the applicant requests above the maximum, it must justify your request. Please note that such requests are rarely approved.

All recompeting and continuation Grantees requesting a higher cost per MSY than in the previous year must include a compelling rationale for this increased cost including why this increase could not be covered by grantee share. This applies even if the increased cost per MSY is less than the maximum or if the increase is due to increased costs associated with the grant.

Applications that are Cost-Reimbursement grants: (\$13,730/MSY maximum)

Applications that are Fixed Price grants (\$13,430/MSY maximum)

Selection Criteria	Not Responsive Information missing	Marginally Responsive Needs clarification/ Additional information	Responsive Needs little additional information	Total Score
a. COST EFFECTIVENESS	0	9	18	

- The budget is sufficient to carry out the program effectively.
- The budget aligns with the applicant's narrative.
- The program design is cost effective and the benefits justify the cost.
- The applicant has raised or describes an adequate plan to raise non-CNCS resources to fully support the program. This applies to Fixed Amount, EAP, and Cost Reimbursement grants.
- The applicant, if recompeting, has a lower cost per Member Service Year (MSY – see Glossary) than approved in previous grants, or provides a compelling rationale for the same or increased cost including why this increase could not be covered by the grantee share.

Having a low Cost Per Member Service year (MSY) is a competitive advantage. New applicants that submit with a low cost per MSY and recompeting applicants that submit with a lower cost per MSY than previously funded may receive higher priority for funding. Applicants requesting a higher cost per MSY than in previous years must justify their requests. If an applicant requests above the maximum cost per MSY (see Section 5.C.), it must justify its request. Please note that such requests are rarely approved.

Selection Criteria	Not Responsive Information missing	Marginally Responsive Needs clarification/ Additional information	Responsive Needs little additional information	Total Score
b. BUDGET ADEQUACY	0	3.5	7	

BUDGET ADEQUACY

- Budget is submitted without mathematical errors.
- Budget is submitted with adequate information to assess how each line item is calculated.
- Budget is in compliance with the budget instructions.

Applicants must fill out the budget and ensure the following information is in the budget narrative (requested information in the budget screens):

- Identify the non-CNCS funding and resources necessary to support the project.
- Indicate the amount of non-CNCS resource commitments, type of commitments (in-kind and/or cash) and the sources of these commitments.

REVIEWER COMMENTS/FEEDBACK for Cost-Effectiveness and Budget Adequacy:

5. Evaluation Summary or Plan (Required for recompeting grantees - 0 points)

- If the applicant is competing for the first time, they will enter N/A in the Evaluation Summary or Plan field since it pertains only to recompeting Grantees.
- If the applicant is recompeting for AmeriCorps funds for the first time the program has submitted their evaluation plan in the Evaluation Plan field in eGrants.
- If the applicant is recompeting for a subsequent time, the program has submitted their

evaluation report as well as an evaluation plan for the next three-year period.

Evaluation plans must include the following:

- A description of the theory of change, or why the proposed intervention is expected to produce the proposed results;
- Clear and measurable outcomes that are aligned with the theory of change and will be assessed during the evaluation;
- Concrete research questions (or hypotheses) that are clearly connected to the outcomes;
- A proposed research design for the evaluation;
- Qualifications needed for the evaluator; and
- The estimated budget.

The evaluation requirements differ depending on the amount of the grant, as described in 45 CFR §2522.710:

- If the applicant is a State/Territory subgrantee and/or National Direct Grantee (other than an Education Award Program grantee), and its average annual CNCS program grant is \$500,000 or more, it must arrange for an external evaluation of the program, and it must submit the evaluation with any subsequent application to CNCS for competitive funds as required in §2522.730 of this subpart.
- If the applicant is a State/Territory subgrantee and/or National Direct Grantee whose average annual CNCS program grant is less than \$500,000, or an Education Award Program Grantee, it must conduct an internal or an external evaluation of the program, and it must submit the evaluation with any subsequent application to CNCS for competitive funds as required in §2522.730 of this subpart.

A program will be considered a recompeting application if it satisfies the CNCS definition of “same project” (see Glossary) and has been funded competitively for at least one complete three-year cycle. If the project satisfies the definition of same project and the applicant has completed one three-year cycle, it will be required to submit an evaluation plan. If the project satisfied the definition of same project and the applicant has completed two or more three-year cycles, the applicant will be required to submit an evaluation report as well as an evaluation plan. If the project does not satisfy the definition of recompeting, it will not be required to submit an evaluation plan, summary, or completed evaluation.

The Evaluation Plan field of eGrants does not count towards the page limit of the application; however, it does have a set character limit. Applicants should print out the report to ensure the narrative is not cut off.

State/Territory subgrantees and/or National Direct Grantees with an average annual CNCS program grant of \$500,000 or more that are recompeting for funds are eligible to apply for approval of an alternative evaluation approach. Grantees requesting approval of an alternative evaluation approach should submit a request for approval of an alternative evaluation approach along with their evaluation plan in the Evaluation Summary or Plan field in eGrants. The request should clearly explain: (a) the evaluation constraints faced by the program, (b) why the proposed approach is the most rigorous option feasible, and (c) how the proposed alternative approach will help the grantee build their evidence base. Evaluation plans should include, at a minimum, the required elements listed in this Notice. The evaluation plan must be consistent with the information submitted in the competitive funding application and in the request for approval of an alternative evaluation approach. More information on alternative evaluation approaches can be found at:

https://www.nationalserviceresources.gov/files/guidance_for_grantees_approval_of_alternative_evaluation_approach.pdf.

REVIEWER COMMENTS/FEEDBACK for Evaluation Summary or Plan:

6. Amendment Justification (0 percent)

Enter N/A. This field will be used if the applicant is awarded a grant and needs to amend it.

7. Clarification Information (0 percent)

Enter N/A. This field will be used to enter information that requires clarification in the post-review period.

8. Continuation Changes (0 percent)

Enter N/A. This field will be used to enter changes in the application narratives in continuation requests.

The performance measures this applicant proposes:		YES	NO
<input type="checkbox"/>	Are National Performance Measures		
<input type="checkbox"/>	Align with the application narrative		
<input type="checkbox"/>	Align with the logic model submitted by the applicant		
<input type="checkbox"/>	Has targets that are reasonable - not too low and/or not too high for the # of AmeriCorps members requested		
<input type="checkbox"/>	Align logically, i.e., the results of interventions provided by AmeriCorps members should, in fact, result in what the applicant proposes as an outcome		
The measurement tools this applicant proposes:			
<input type="checkbox"/>	Adequately measure results		
<input type="checkbox"/>	Need to be strengthened		